

# CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## PEER COACHING PROGRAM

A Team Approach to Succession Planning

February 2011

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Peer Coaching Program is to maintain a proactive process that encourages staff to participate in professional development to facilitate leadership succession within the California Department of Education.

## GOAL

The goal of the Peer Coaching Program is to develop the following six (6) leadership competencies\* in the individuals participating in this program that will help prepare them for leadership roles within the California Department of Education:

- **Fostering a Team Environment:** Includes development of skills in interpersonal relationships, communication, team leadership and conflict management.
- **Creating Organizational Transformation:** Includes developing skills in change leadership, vision and strategic thinking, organizational awareness, flexibility, and a global perspective.
- **Maximizing Performance Results:** Includes development of skills in analytical thinking, decision making, focusing on the customer, planning and organizing, ensuring completed staff work, looking for results and forward thinking.
- **Building Trust and Accountability:** Includes development of skills in ethics and awareness, and personal credibility
- **Promoting a High Performance Culture:** Includes developing skills in fostering diversity, workforce management, and developing others.
- **Building Coalitions:** Includes developing skills in relationship building and influencing others.

\* *State of California Leadership Competency Model* dated January 2010

## PROCESS SUMMARY

The Special Services and Support Branch (Branch) will pilot this program. The Branch will have a team or teams of three or four people interested in developing their leadership competencies. Each member of the team will develop a project concept with the concurrence of their Division Director. The team members will coach/mentor each other to build their leadership competencies as they develop their projects with input from the team.

## **BENEFIT TO THE PARTICIPANTS, DIVISION, AND DEPARTMENT**

The California Department of Education views the Peer Coaching Program as an investment. As such, the benefits of the program must be clear to everyone before the commitment is made to invest the time and energy required to support it.

Participants will benefit from professional development specific to the leadership competencies and from improved productivity within the parameters of their project. As these benefits are realized, participants will be more likely to promote quality and efficiency in delivering services to the public in their daily activities on the job as well.

Participants will also benefit from establishing a network of peers they can confide in and consult with as they continue to grow professionally throughout their careers at the California Department of Education. More direct contact with the Division Director and the Branch Deputy provides participants with an opportunity to demonstrate their skills as potential successors in departmental leadership roles.

The Division Directors will benefit by increasing their pool of qualified candidates for movement into leadership roles. They will also benefit when projects relative to their Division are completed by the participants.

Since this program is tied to workforce development and succession planning, the Department will benefit by ensuring the integrity of the programs they are responsible for and developing staff from within the organization who will work toward the common goals of the Department. Another benefit of the program is that it will serve to break down the silo mentality by providing cross-division exposure, thereby improving communication and service delivery to our customers.

## **POSSIBLE TEAM STRUCTURES**

Teams will be composed of three to four people. While non-management classifications, may participate, their interests must be in moving into leadership roles in the future. Ideally, the team will be composed of individuals in different classifications. Teams may be comprised of individuals within the same career track or by individuals in different career tracks.

**Each participant must complete an application** and apply to the program through their supervisor and Division Director. (An application is located at the end of this manual.) Participants will be selected based on their interest in the program, demonstrated interest in leadership, and their Division project. Although this program is voluntary and there is no assurance of advancement after completion, personal and professional growth is the ultimate goal. Team composition will be determined by mutual consent of the participants and the Branch Office based on the number of applications received and the background of the individuals applying.

## **PARTICIPANT PROJECTS**

The participant project must be listed on the application; therefore, participants must meet with their supervisors and their Division Director to develop the project concept prior to submitting their application. The participant's project, with respect to the coaching/mentor program, should contribute to meeting one or more of the leadership competency goals listed on page 1. Meeting with their supervisor and Division Director to develop a project concept in the context of the leadership competencies will add to the value of the experience.

With the leadership competencies in mind, begin thinking of projects that will help your division meet its primary goals. (Those familiar with *Good To Great*, should think of the Hedge Hog theory.) Another good place to start is the Division's mission statement so that your project will help your Division meet its mission. Consider the following questions to help you develop the objective of your project. What project, if completed, will:

- improve departmental operations?
- enhance services provided by your Division?
- help your internal or external customers?
- help close the achievement gap?
- provide benefits to the "whole child?"
- facilitate delivery of educational services?
- result in expanded learning opportunities?

Once the project direction is clear, the applicant may submit an application to the Peer Coaching Program. The project outcome should be measurable and based on SMART goals. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely. Establishing your project based on SMART goals will ensure a clear benefit to your Division.

## **TIME COMMITMENT**

At a minimum, participants should be prepared to meet for two hours at least once a month for eight months. Time will be required to review projects, discuss any issues with the

projects (coaching/mentoring time), and to reflect on the leadership competencies and how to build skills in this area.

Beyond the time commitment to meet, there will be time required for participants to work on the approved project. Most often, time for this activity will be absorbed into the participants' regular workday since it is a project directly relevant to their unit or Division. The project should be high priority and considered part of the participant's workload.

## **THE MEETING PROCESS**

An initial meeting with program organizers will take place to orient participants to the leadership competency concepts, introduce team members and their projects, and instruct participants in the process.

The purpose for outlining a meeting process is to give structure to the sharing of suggestions and ideas about the project the participant is working on and to discuss problems and questions that may arise during the program period. There are two components to the process: the project component and the leadership competency component. Responsibility for facilitating both processes will be determined by mutual consent of the team members. Team members may choose to rotate the facilitation responsibility.

### **The Project Component**

Each team member will have 20 to 30 minutes to describe their project and the status of its development. At this point, the presenting team member will explain any successes, problems, or challenges they may be facing with their project. This component of the meeting will include time for the other team members to ask questions for clarity, brainstorm ideas to answer the questions, share ideas, and offer coaching/mentoring advice to the presenting team member.

This process will be repeated for each team member as a means of gaining support and taking advantage of coaching and mentoring opportunities. Meaningful input and discussion around project issues will serve to develop participant perspectives and enhance the experience gained through their project.

### **The Leadership Competency Component**

The second component of the meeting will be to discuss the leadership competencies listed on page one. There are six competencies listed. Over the eight month period, each group will formally discuss each competency each month. The intent of this component is to review the concepts around the competencies and consider how these concepts might be applied to the participant's project. Resources related to the leadership competencies will be provided by the Training Office or Branch Office for each meeting.

At least one of these meetings may be attended by the Branch Deputy or their designee. The purpose for their attendance is to learn more about the projects and to contribute to the higher level concepts discussed during the leadership competencies component of the meeting. The Branch Deputy, at the very least, will attend the last meeting, if their schedule permits. Professional growth will occur while discussing high level management concepts, particularly when high level executives are involved.

We recommend the meetings be held on the third Wednesday of each month at a convenient time and location, but of course, the team will make the ultimate decision. Use the calendar at the back of this manual to set the dates and times for the course of the program.

### **PROGRAM COMPLETION**

At the completion of the eight month period, team members who have met their commitment to the program will receive a certificate of completion signed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. It is our hope that each participant will be proud of the initiative he/she took to develop professional level leadership competencies and will have gained perspectives required in higher level positions. Participants will complete an evaluation after each session for completion of the Program.

### **IS IT COACHING OR MENTORING?**

The process outlined in this manual is not dependent on feedback or guidance from a wise or highly experienced individual. It is more of a peer coaching process where team members support one another to develop skills, improve performance, and solve problems common to activities in the normal workdays. More formal supervisorial input is incorporated into the project component of the program throughout the 8-month period, but the monthly meetings will be team members only.

Each member of the team is viewed as an equal member. Each member will be expected to contribute to the meetings by:

- preparing for the meetings in advance
- participating in professional dialogue
- making and commenting on observations
- developing their skills along with other team members
- being supportive
- remaining confidential
- maintaining trust at all times

This process is noncompetitive and will not be used as an evaluation tool. While social interactions occur, meetings should be professional in nature and not used as a social hour.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Individuals interested in this program are to be congratulated! Being an active participant is proof of being proactive in professional development, and the participant will surely benefit from this process. Each interested employee shall complete the attached application and submit it to their Branch Deputy through their Division Director. Each employee will be notified when his/her application has been accepted.

If you have any questions, please call Andrew Laufer, Education Administrator 1 in the Special Services and Support Branch, at 319-0559

Good luck!



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**California Department of Education  
PEER COACHING PROGRAM APPLICATION**

Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Submitted \_\_\_\_\_

Job Classification: \_\_\_\_\_ Division: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Division Director: \_\_\_\_\_

**Why do you want to be a part of this program?**

(Please include a small description as to why you feel this program will assist you in professional development.)

**What types of leadership roles are you interested in pursuing?**

(What position do you ultimately see yourself in?)

**Leadership Competencies**

(Which of the leadership competencies listed on page 1 do you need to "grow" in, and which do you "glow" in?)

**Description of Division Project**

(See "Team Member Projects" starting on page 2.)

By signing this application, the applicant agrees to commit to this program and their cohort to attend at least one monthly meeting per month for the entire program.

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this application, the Division Director agrees to support the applicant's participation in the Peer Leader Program for the duration of the program.

Director's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## PEER COACHING PROGRAM MEETING CALENDAR

Leadership Competency	Time	Location
Introduction to Program	2 hrs.	TBD
Fostering a Team Environment	2 hrs.	TBD
Creating Organizational Transformation	2 hrs.	TBD
Maximizing Performance Results	2 hrs.	TBD
Building Trust and Accountability	2 hrs.	TBD
Promoting a High Performance Culture	2 hrs.	TBD
Building Coalition	2 hrs.	TBD
Final Program Meeting	2 hrs.	TBD